

## US beef processing plant closed

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: The US Agriculture Department took action Friday to shut down a beef processing plant in Nebraska that has recently recalled more than 600,000 pounds (270,000 kilos) of meat because of E. coli contamination, reports AP.

The plant shutdown was the latest food safety blow to the beef industry, which this summer endured the nation's biggest-ever meat recall because of E. coli contamination.

USDA withdrew its inspectors from the BeefAmerica Operating Co. plant in Norfolk, Nebraska, after discovering repeated violations of sanitation rules governing fecal contamination and other problems that the company had previously been warned about.

Removal of federal meat inspectors effectively closes a processing plant.

"This decision is based on your inability to maintain and operate your facility in a sanitary manner," said Fernando Soares, USDA's inspector in charge, in a letter to Beef America.

Among the problems cited by USDA were contamination with animal fecal matter — the source of E. coli and other dangerous bacteria — on finished beef products and some ready for shipment.

In addition, USDA found peeling paint on surfaces that come into contact with meat and hydraulic fluid and blood was observed dripping on equipment.

**Market liberalisation**  
**G-15 countries urged to be cautious**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 1: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad reminded the Group of Fifteen (G-15) developing countries today to be cautious in implementing market liberalisation and globalisation plans, reports AFP.

Citing how "a liberal policy towards currency and share trading has resulted in abuses which undermine years of painstaking efforts to develop the countries of Southeast Asia," Mahathir urged G-15 members to be more circumspect.

"The success of the members of the G-15 depends on their ability to understand the changes in the global market place and to influence these changes in their favour," he said when opening a G-15 trade fair.

"They cannot be passive and accept anything and everything that is thrust upon them," said the outspoken premier, known for his anti-West stance.

While there were genuine investors, "We must not forget that there are many who only see opportunities for enriching themselves at our expense," he added, referring to Southeast Asia's financial crisis.

The Malaysian leader has repeatedly accused foreign funds of destabilising Southeast Asian financial markets which have plunged since July, and spearheaded calls to regulate currency trading.

While "the world is galloping towards globalisation and liberalisation," Mahathir noted that the actual definition of the two terms was still unclear.

But "developed countries have taken it upon themselves to interpret these terms as meaning that removal of barriers to their trade and their investments including portfolio investment," he said.

The Malaysian leader warned his developing counterparts to "watch this very carefully as their own industries are not yet able to compete and take advantage of investments in other countries."

**G-7 nations pledge \$72m more for rain forests**

SAO PAULO, Brazil, Nov 1: The world's seven most industrialised nations have pledged an additional 72 million dollars to Brazil's ambitious project to protect its rain forests while developing the vast Amazon region, reports AP.

The contributions were announced Thursday at the end of a four-day meeting between Brazil and the G-7 countries held in the northern jungle city of Manaus, 3,930 kilometers (2,440 miles) northwest of Sao Paulo.

"Although we didn't get the 80 to 90 million dollars we wanted to complete the financing of several projects, the 72 million dollar that were pledged represent an excellent result," Jose Seixas Lourenco of the Environment Ministry said Friday. "And besides, we still have time to negotiate the difference."

Created two years ago, the Pilot Programme for the Protection of Brazil's Tropical Rain Forests has already received 250 million dollars from the G-7 countries — the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Japan.

## Govt wants it ready by Nov

# Shrimp farms seek more time to meet EU criteria

By Govinda Shil

Shrimp exporters and government are now in a disagreement on time-frame for completion of the on-going renovation work at fish processing plants and testing laboratories. The work is designed to help the country's shrimp sector qualify for the European frozen food market.

Fish exporters want the government to meet the European Union's sanitary and health requirements with enough time. On the other hand, the minister concerned he wants to see the things done before he invites an EU veterinary team in the late November.

The officials are now preparing a fresh list of the fish processing plants which they will send to the EU headquarters

welcoming EU inspection. Quality control department of the Fisheries and Livestock Ministry has already started an investigation into about 45 factories willing to continue fish exports to the EU member countries.

After visiting the plants and government laboratories last month, a two member EU team have indicated that the authorities should take at least another three to six months to upgrade those installations.

The EU banned imports of Bangladeshi frozen foods to its member countries on July 30 after it had found the local factories and laboratories not maintaining EU standards. The EU also imposed same ban on Maldives and India on similar

ground. The EU team, which submitted a report on its visit to the government on October 14, said it could not see any significant change in the fish processing plants.

There is a little evidence of changes in the actual processes of production or of working HACCP manual, said the report. Satish Chandra Roy, State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock, said the EU team was happy seeing the 'tremendous changes' in the plants and laboratories.

Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association (BFEEA) sources said the government has done nothing to feel happy. "We are not happy over the developments in the govern-

ment laboratories," said one of the prominent BFEEA leaders. He said there are several critical water tests for which Bangladesh do not have equipment.

Satish Chandra Roy said the government had asked the EU headquarters to provide Dhaka with the equipment on credit. He hoped that the lab equipment would come soon.

He said the construction of 12 shrimp landing centres in Khulna region will begin soon.

The project, however, is awaiting the Prime Minister's approval, he said.

Eight such centres have already been constructed in greater Chittagong region to cope with one of the EU guidelines.

## Creation of computer village suggested

Bikram Dasgupta, an outstanding Indian entrepreneur in Information Technology sector, said 600 billion US dollars investment is coming to the area of Y2K Project all over the world.

He was delivering the keynote address at a two-day seminar on Information Technology sponsored by Rapport Bangladesh Ltd. at a local hotel on Thursday, says a press release.

A huge computer software business is also coming to the area of 2000 conversion in computer, he said.

He suggested creation of computer village and introduction of total computerisation of corporate management system.

Inaugurated by Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfar Rahman Sarkar the seminar was participated by chief executive and senior managers from Agrabad Hotel, American Express Bank, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, Beximco Computers Ltd, International Office Equipment, Leads Corporation, Padma Textile Mills Limited, Rahimafrooz (Bangladesh) Limited, Rupantarika Prakhriti Gas Co Limited, Uttara Bank Limited and Beximco Textiles Ltd.

The inaugural session was chaired by an eminent educationist and former secretary, Dr Abdullah Al Muti Sharifuddin, and also addressed by M. Mosharraf Hossain, Managing Director of Rapport Bangladesh Ltd.

## US stocks close higher

NEW YORK, Nov 1: US stocks closed higher on Friday, as the market limped out of one of the most turbulent weeks in Wall Street's history, reports Reuter.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 60.41, or 0.82 per cent, to 7224.08 based on early and unofficial data.

"Hong Kong was stable and quiet last night, so Wall Street rallied out of exhaustion and relief," said Hugh Johnson, chief investment officer at First Albany Corp.

Hong Kong's blue chip index ended a tumultuous week 2.5 per cent higher on Friday after a stock slump there triggered a huge sell-off in markets around the world.

For the week, the Dow lost 3.5 per cent in the busiest week of trading in history, with 3.99 billion shares changing hands on Friday, volume of roughly 630 million, usually considered busy, paled in comparison to the frenetic pace earlier in the week, when trading hit a daily peak of 1.2 billion shares.



Lutfar Rahman Sarkar, Governor of Bangladesh Bank (fifth from right) is seen with contributors and participants of the seminar on Information Technology organised by Rapport Bangladesh Ltd at a city hotel on Thursday.

## US blamed for cutting supplies Iraq reduces rations of 5 basic goods for Nov

BAGHDAD, Nov 1: The Iraqi government said Friday it was reducing the rations of five basic goods for November, and blamed the United States for having to cut supplies for a second consecutive month, says AP.

The Trade Ministry announced cuts of 17 to 60 per cent in the monthly provisions of salt, cooking oil, tea, soap and detergent.

In a statement to the official Iraqi News Agency, the ministry said the shortages were caused by "the United States holding up approval and continuing to cancel" contracts in the oil-for-food programme.

Iraq has repeatedly complained of slow deliveries under the UN Security Council's oil-for-food program, which allows the country to bypass sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait and sell two billion dollars of

oil every six months. Under the programme, Iraq may use the oil revenue to buy humanitarian goods for its 22 million people, but the purchases must be approved by UN headquarters in New York. Iraq has accused the United States of using its influence to deny or delay approval of such contracts.

In Friday's statement, Iraq said it had not received sufficient quantities of the reduced items.

The ministry said the November ration cards to be issued Saturday will cut tea by 17 per cent to 125 grams (4.38 ounces), cooking oil by 25 per cent to 750 grams (1.65 pounds), soap by 60 per cent to 100 grams (3.5 ounces), salt by 17 per cent to 125 grams (4.38 ounces), and detergent by 19 per cent to 120 grams (8.75 ounces).

## Lankan economy benefits from capital inflows

COLOMBO, Nov 1: A 98 per cent rise in net capital inflows during the first eight months of this year has boosted the Sri Lankan economy, the local press quoted the central bank as saying yesterday, reports Xinhua.

Due to the surge of capital inflows, Sri Lanka was able to achieve a balance of payment surplus of 375 million US dollars as against a deficit of 33 million dollars last year.

The rise of net capital inflows from 288 million dollars in the corresponding period last year to 569 million dollars as of August this year was mainly due to the increased privatisation proceeds and improvement in government's foreign aid

utilisation, the bank said. The central bank expects the total capital inflows to exceed one billion dollars by the end of the year.

Balance of payments is also expected to register a significant improvement from a deficit of 134 million dollars to a surplus of 412 million dollars.

Despite a rise in export, however, the trade deficit has been widened from 792 million dollars to 921 million dollars due to high import of intermediate and capital goods during the period, the bank said.

Exports from January to August reached 2.9 billion dollars, an increase of 11.6 per cent over the corresponding period last year.

## Workshop on financial reporting begins today

A 10-day training workshop on financial reporting, jointly sponsored by Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) and the Financial Times of London, begins today (Sunday) at the National Press Club, reports UNB.

State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed will inaugurate the workshop at 10 am. Martin Mulligan of the Financial Times of London will conduct the training to be participated by 15 journalists from Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal and Bogra.

Hassan Shahriar, Vice-President of the London-based CJA and President of its Bangladesh Chapter, will preside over the opening session of the workshop, said a press release.

## 30,000 Thai automobile workers to lose jobs

BANGKOK, Nov 1: Thailand's automotive industry will lay off about 30,000 workers next year when sales will plummet by an estimated 33 per cent, according to Toyota Motor Thailand Co, says Xinhua.

Automobile sales next year are expected to reach 240,000 units, or perhaps as low as 180,000 units, Ninnart Chaitirapinyo, the company's senior managing director, was quoted today by local press as saying.

Toyota, the market leader, expects total sales by all companies this year to reach 360,000 units. Last year, more than 500,000 vehicles were sold nationwide.

Ninnart predicted that the industry would need to lay off at least 30,000 workers next year because of the slowdown in domestic sales.

## WB scheme pipes water to Himalayan villages

Villages in the lower Himalayan foothills in India's most populous state have found a solution to years-old scarcity of drinking water, thanks to an innovative World Bank project, reports AP.

The 71 million dollar scheme has spared the residents of this remote hamlet the daily struggle over long distances to fetch the household water supply.

Twenty-five-year old Govind Devi, a member of the Aagar Village Water and Sanitation Committee, said women in the area had to spend several hours a day fetching water for household needs. "We now get more time for our children and family," she said.

Another housewife Shabuli said she planned to use the spare time learning how to make greeting cards from handmade paper which would fetch the family extra income. Several illiterate women in the village said they could now learn how to read and write.

"We call it the 'Swajal' (own water) project," said project di-

rector Parmeshwaran Aiyer, also secretary in the state's Rural Development Department. "I have not seen more joy and hope in the eyes of people as I see now," he told IANS. "Even for a bucket of water, these people were walking up to one or two kilometers. They had hardly ever imagined supply of water at their very doorstep that this new scheme envisages to provide now," he said.

The scheme was launched earlier this month with the signing of a tripartite agreement funded by the World Bank, Programme Management Unit, a local nongovernmental organisation (NGO), and the representative body of the village people called the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC).

Officials said this was the first project of its kind where the cost was being shared between the World Bank, the state government and the beneficiaries in the village, in the ratio of 84 per cent, six per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

The programme was launched in two remote villages in the difficult Garhwal hill terrain. Some 700 villages are to be eventually covered over a six year period. A similar scheme will also be launched in over 300 villages in the water scarce Bundelkhand area in southern Uttar Pradesh.

Officials said the participation of the community has been ensured right from the pre-planning stage, and both the implementation and maintenance of the project have to be carried out by the village committee.

"It took us some time to realise that this was very different," said a village elder, who felt that because the villagers themselves were involved this time, this scheme would not end up like the numerous government schemes that fail to take off.

Bank project is underway in Maharashtra and Karnataka, according to Mohandas Palat, a senior rural development official in the Union government who was present at the inauguration here.

"It was no mean task to convince the villagers to shell out one percent of the project cost in cash and keep another nine percent reserved to be put in the form of labour," project director Aiyer said.

The scheme will be implemented with the help of NGOs but its day-to-day supervision will be in the hands of the village committees, whose members are to be trained by the voluntary groups, officials said.

"The interesting part is that once again, it is the villagers who have themselves contributed funds for the annual maintenance," said Cyril Rappahel, head of the Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram, one of the groups overseeing the project.

Source: India Abroad News Service

## IMF announces \$23b economic rescue package for Indonesia

WASHINGTON, Nov 1: The International Monetary Fund announced a 23 billion dollars economic rescue package for Indonesia on Friday, the second-largest such bailout in history as authorities scrambled to contain a currency crisis that has rattled financial markets from Tokyo to New York, reports AP.

The United States said it would provide backup assistance, a reversal for the Clinton administration, which had refused to participate directly in a 17.5 billion dollars rescue effort for Thailand two months ago because of all the controversy generated by the 1995 US bailout of Mexico.

Both the administration and Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan had become increasingly worried in recent days that the continuing economic turmoil in Southeast Asia was threatening to destabilise financial markets worldwide.

A severe plunge of the Hong Kong stock market last week was the triggering event for Monday's record 554-point stock plunge on Wall Street, dramatically underscoring how interconnected the world economy has become.

The IMF package of 23 billion dollars for Indonesia will be backed up by three billion dollars in US loans plus additional assistance from Japan, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia.

IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus said the IMF will provide the largest share of the package, 10 billion dollars, with 4.5 billion dollars coming from the World Bank, 3.5 billion dollars from the Asian Development Bank and five billion dollars from Indonesia's own assets.

In exchange for the economic

support, Indonesia agreed to a series of economic reforms, including closing down unhealthy banks, reducing food subsidies, removing trade barriers and ending inefficient state monopolies.

"This programme ushers in ambitious reforms designed to equip Indonesia's economy for the challenges and opportunities of globalisation in the coming decades," Camdessus told reporters. He also praised Indonesia's leaders for their vision and courage and readiness to take such a decisive stance in

## Jakarta to close 16 sick banks

JAKARTA, Nov 1: Indonesia will close 16 financially-troubled banks, Finance Minister Marle Muhammad told a press briefing on an International Monetary Fund aid package worth 23 billion dollars to shore up the Indonesian economy, reports AFP.

The Indonesian minister expressed his "gratitude and appreciation to all international agencies and important economies that have indicated their support to Indonesia," the Japanese finance ministry said.

Japanese Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuoka urged Indonesia today to meet conditions on the package agreed with the IMF, including plans to abide by any ruling from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on Indonesia's national car programme.

"Indonesia is one of the Asian countries which maintain sound economic fundamentals," Mitsuoka said in his speech in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture, northern Japan.

such difficult circumstances." World Bank President James D Wolfensohn said the package is "strongly welcome." Bank help would come in the form of technical assistance for banking sector reforms as well as the 4.3 billion dollars in disbursements for "adjustment operations and existing and planned investment loans," Wolfensohn said.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, in announcing the administration's decision, emphasised that direct US loans would serve only as a second line of defence should be economic situation in Indonesia not be stabilised by the initial 23 billion dollars. But he insisted that American businesses and workers had a lot at stake.

"Financial stability around the world is critical to the national security and economic interests of the United States," Rubin said. "In today's global economy, the health and prosperity of the American economy depend importantly on the stability of the global financial system and the economic health of our trading partners."

The package of initial and backup support was expected to total more than 35 billion dollars, making it the second largest rescue package in IMF history after the 50 billion dollars made available for Mexico.

The administration took the lead in putting together the Mexican assistance package, forcing some European nations to go along reluctantly. When Congress balked, President Clinton exercised his authority to use the Exchange Stabilisation Fund, created in the 1930s to support the dollar.

US support for Mexico ultimately totalled 12 billion dollars in loans, which Mexico finished paying back earlier this year.

## New York Chinese businessmen angry at politicians' snub to Jiang

NEW YORK, Nov 1: Business leaders in New York's Chinese community were unhappy with local politicians' for giving China's president a very "unfriendly" reception on Friday. On the Chinatown street, the reaction was mixed, reports AP.

"It's not very polite. Neither the mayor nor the governor (of New York state) greeted President Jiang Zemin," said George Hua, general secretary of the United Chinese Associations, an umbrella group that represents about 60 organisations.

The city's business community, meanwhile, pulled out the high-tech stops for Jiang, a trained electrical engineer looking to modernise his nation.

"The New York business world received him warmly, while the politicians were very very unfriendly," said Hua. "The Chinese community is very disappointed with the behaviour of New York City and its government."

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani refused to meet Jiang because of concerns about human and civil rights in China, spokeswoman Colleen Roche said. "And a... he's in the midst of a re-election campaign, he has a tight schedule, and these are competing interests," she said.

Governor George Pataki also did not meet with the Chinese president. His spokeswoman, Zenia Mucha, cited scheduling conflicts as well as "a prior personal commitment."

## Exchange Rates

The following are the Sonali Bank's dealing rates (BD Tk for one unit of Foreign Currency) to public as on 30th, 31st Oct '97 & 1st Nov '97.

	Buying		
	TT Clean	OD Sight	OD Export
US Dlr	44.8350	44.6545	44.5580
GB Pound	74.7231	74.4223	74.2615
D Mark	25.9365	25.8321	25.7763
F Franc	7.7469	7.7158	7.6991
C Dlr	31.7945	31.6665	31.5980
S Franc	31.8194	31.6913	31.6228
JP Yen	0.3689	0.3674	0.3666

**Selling**

	Name of CURRENCY	T.T. & O.D.	B.C.
US Dollar		45.2105	45.2505
GB Pound		75.96226	76.0294
D Mark		26.4320	26.4553
F Franc		7.8924	7.8994
C Dollar		32.3945	32.4232
S Franc		32.4315	32.4602
JP Yen		0.3796	0.3800

A) TT (DOC) US Dollar Spot Buying Tk. 44.744

B) Usance Rate

Days	30	60	90	120	180
US Dollar	44.744	44.744	44.744	44.744	44.744

C) US Dollar sight export bill 3 months forward purchase. Same as OD sight export bill buying rate.

Currency	Selling	Buying
Saudi Riyal	12.0520	11.8733
UAE Dir	12.3102	12.1312
KW Dir	149.3081	147.0561
D Guider	23.0501	22.7059
S Krona	6.0040	5.9135

## Shipping Intelligence

### CHITTAGONG PORT

Berth position and performance of vessels as on 30-10-97

Be#	Name of vessels	Cargo	Port	Local agent	Date of Leaving
J/1	Stella-F	G	Mad	Oil	27/10
J/2	Liyong Gun Bong	Gil(Copra)	Sing	OSA	25/10
J/4	Alant Sriapas	Wheat(G)	Sing	Agent	22/10
J/6	Pericles	R Seed	Ruan	Rainbow	28/10
J/7	Banglar Kiron	Wheat(G)	Mong	BSC	25/10
J/8	Xuan Cheng	G	Chin	Seagory	22/10
J/9	Golden Ocean	Urea(G)	-	CTP	R/A
J/11	Banglar Asha	Wheat(G)	UKra	AAS	12/10
J/12	Mykola Movchan	Urea(G)	Indo	Seacom	21/10
CCT/3	Hermes	Cont	Sing	RSL	26/10
RM/14	Great Best-1	Cement	P Kel	USTC	9/10
CCJ	banglar Shobha	C Clink	Sikka	BSC	14/10
RM/4	Albatros-II	Urea(G)	Rawa	Cross	15/10
RM/5	Sandgate	HSD	Mina	MSTPL	27/10